FLASHBACK

Preserving the Past for the Future

Volume 51 **December 2001** **Number 4**

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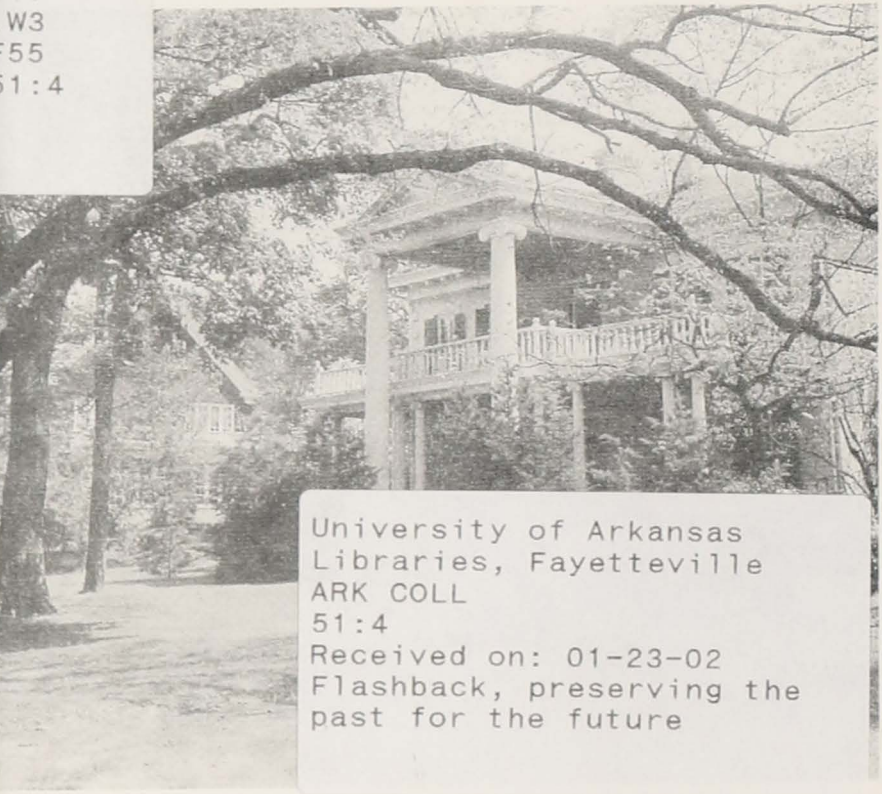

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Flashback, preserving the
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The Futrall Home in 1961—*Photo by W. J. Lemke*

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Washington County Historical Society

118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

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Cover Photo: The Futrall Home in 1961 as photographed by W.J. Lemke.

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WCHS Home Page

To call up the Washington County Historical Society's home page go to:
www.ipa.net/~wchs
The Society's E-mail address is wchse@ipa.net

The Flashback Continues

As promised, the final FLASHBACK flashback features several pictures from the 1951 Razorback. Thanks to the restoration project of a few years ago, Old Main now looks pretty much like it did 50 years ago when the Washington County Historical Society was getting started. But the views from Old Main have certainly changed.

Much thanks to Charles Stewart, long-time WCHS member and former state legislator, for loaning us the 1951 Razorback, and to the University of Arkansas for permission to use the pictures.

It seemed appropriate that we bring this 50-year flashback to a close by following it through to the end of the tenure of Professor W.J. Lemke, one of the founding fathers of this Society and the long-time editor of this publication. Indeed, Professor Lemke edited every issue of FLASHBACK until Volume 18, Number 4, which carried the notation that Deane G. Carter was "editor this issue." Professor Lemke died the next month, but not before talking Ernie Deane, himself one of Professor Lemke's successful students who had returned to the Journalism Department, into editing the publication.

Following the pictures and before closing with the tenure of Prof. Lemke, a couple of articles caught the editor's eye. First, Mrs. J.C. Futrall takes Professor Lemke through a tour of the old Futrall home (cover), and then one of the early pastors of Fayetteville's Central Methodist Church provides a very interesting description of "The Athens of Arkansas" and the commencement at which Governor Jeff Davis announced the dismissal of then UA President Henry Simms Hartzog. Following that is a truly chilling account of the aftermath of the Battle of Prairie Grove, and then a classic Lemke tale connecting 1862 and 1962.

The Washington County Historical Society dedicated the Tebbetts House as the Society's new headquarters in April of 1968 and Professor Lemke was holding court on the porch that fall, with traffic being especially heavy on football weekend.

-- SVL

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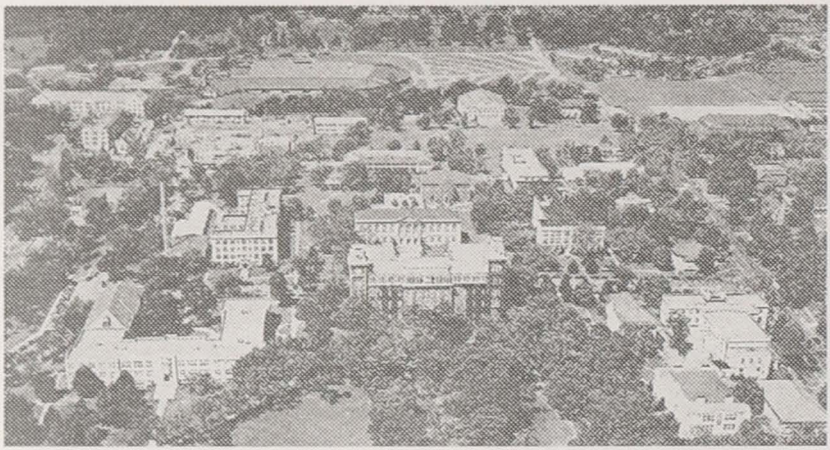

Here's the way the campus looked in 1951, as this picture from the 1951 Razorback shows. Old Main still dominates the center of campus, but its surroundings have definitely changed.

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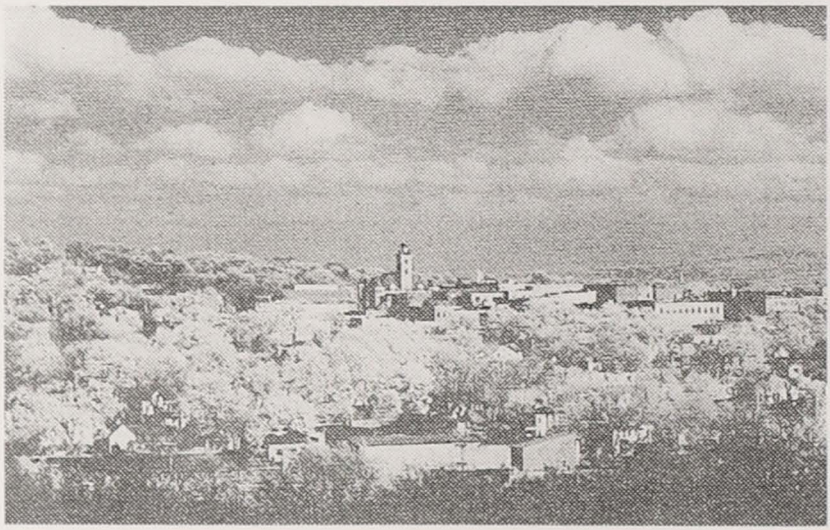

Talk about a view that has changed. This is the view from one of the towers of Old Main looking toward the Fayetteville square in 1951 as documented in the 1951 Razorback.

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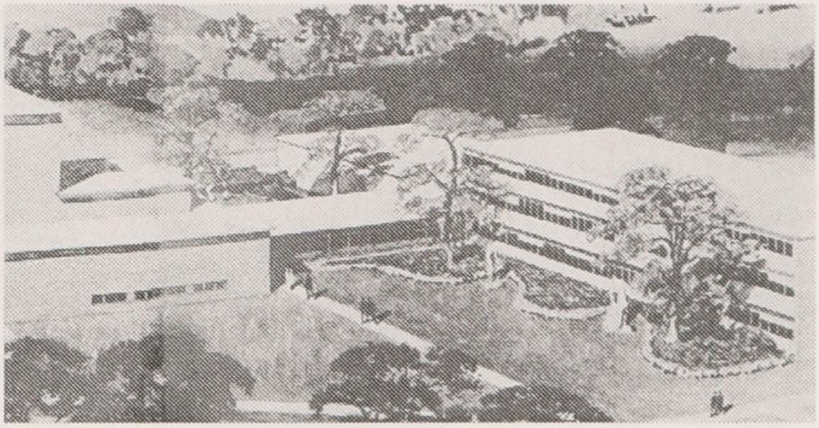

The Fine Arts Building on the University of Arkansas campus opened for classes in the fall of 1951. Construction started in the spring of 1949.

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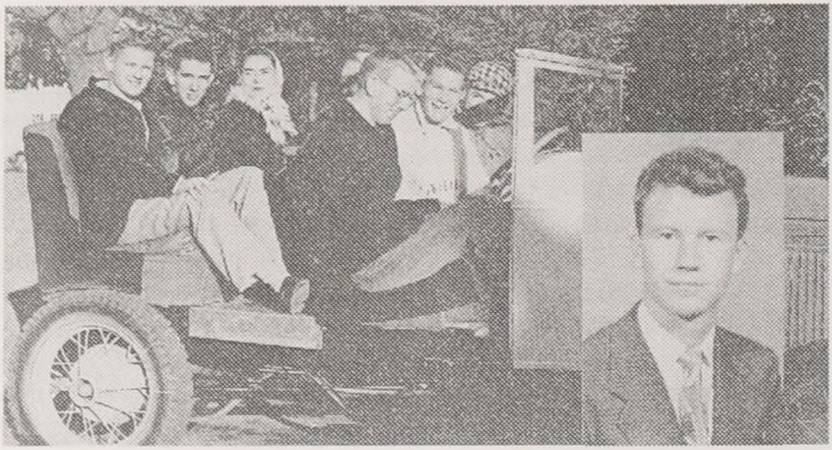
The 1951 Razorback also contained this often reprinted picture. Occupying the back seat is Jack Hold Jr., who would go on to become chief justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court from 1985 to 1995. The front seat is occupied by Fayetteville attorney Thomas Pearson, Jr. The girls and the policemen are unknown.

Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas



"Going our way?" ask the cutline for this picture from the 1951 Razorback. In the back seat are Cedric Pratt, Bob Deaver, and Georgia Doty. In the front seat are Tom Chaffin, Walter Camp and an unidentified driver. The car was "borrowed without permission" from its owner, former State Representative and long-time WCHS member Charles H. Stewart. The inset is how Mr. Stewart looked in 1951.

(From Volume XI, Number 3, August, 1961.)

The House I Live In

By Mrs. J.C. Futrall
As told to W.J. Lemke

The house I live in, at 226 College Avenue, Fayetteville, has been my home for 71 years. It was built shortly after the Civil War by Col. E.I. "Pas" Stirman, who had made an enviable record in the Confederate service, including action at Prairie Grove and Corinth. Colonel Stirman built the house shortly after his return from the War, probably in 1868, the year in which he was elected Mayor of Fayetteville. Some think the house was built a few years later, possibly in 1870-71 when a number of other brick buildings were erected in Fayetteville, among them the Gregg house, the McIlroy Bank building, the Walker house on East Mountain, and others. Construction of Old Main on the University campus began in 1872.

The ground on which the House-I-Live-In stands, had other and more important historical associations. On almost this

identical site, Robert Graham built his Arkansas College in 1850. The College was burned during the War but the name survives in College Avenue. On April 18, 1863, the Confederate general, W.L. Cabell, attacked the Federal occupation troops in Fayetteville. Much of the action, including Colonel Monroe's cavalry charge down from East Mountain, took place where my home now stands. There is a bronze plaque at the entrance of the Christian Church, my next door neighbor, commemorating old Arkansas College, and another marker at the corner of College and Dickson commemorating the battle.

Except for the front porch and some additions at the back, the house is pretty much as Colonel Stirman built it. My father, J.L. Duke, bought the property in 1888 when I was 16 years old. I was married in this historic house ten years later to John C. Futrall. We made some changes in the house, replacing the original front porch with the present columns. And we enclosed the back porch, thus adding on a room. The house has been painted white, but otherwise it is much as it was 60 years ago. The doors, window frames, and staircase are the originals, as is much of the ornamental hardware. The lintels above the windows appear to be wood but they are actually cast-iron painted white. One of the original fireplaces has been removed and other minor changes have been made during the years.

The two front rooms, both downstairs and upstairs, measure 18 by 18 feet. The southwest room has an unusual bay window on the south side. The fireplaces are of brick, with walnut mantels. The wide entrance hall has a walnut staircase with one curve. There were originally two cisterns at the rear of the house but one of these is now under the enclosed back porch.

After living in this house for 71 years, I have many memories - of the five generations who have loved our home - my mother, Mrs. Helen M. Duke, myself, my daughters, my granddaughter and great-grandchildren. The memories also include the notables who have visited in our home - President Taft, governors and university presidents. But I like to remember best the young people who have enriched my life. The annual Presidents reception for the University faculty was always a glamorous occasion. It was held in our home until the late 1930s when the faculty had increased in numbers and it became

necessary to hold the reception in the Student Union.

No description of my home would be complete without mention of the beautiful setting in which the old house stands. Some of the trees are a century old. For many years our dogwood display in the springs was a delight and drew many visitors.

Behind the house is a 2-story brick building that originally served as servants' quarters. Upstairs in this brick out-building is the old-time smoke house, where hams were smoked over a hickory fire. The fire box and some of the hooks that held the hams are still there. But this out-building is now a garage and houses a modern automobile.

(Editor's Note: Everything on the preceding page is as Mrs. Futrall told it to me. I would like to add my own personal tribute to this lovely old home. I first saw the interior of the house in October 1928 when I was a newcomer to the University faculty and a guest at the Futralls' annual faculty reception. After 33 years I can see the scene now. W.S. "Pop" Gregson was at the door and announced our names ("Mr. and Mrs. Lemke") to president and Mrs. Futrall. I don't remember who else was in the receiving line, except that they were Deans, Trustees and such. We worked our way through that room and into the dining room (for refreshments) and eventually out the front door and onto the broad front porch. I took one backward look, at the gaiety and formality and hospitality, and I was sold forever on the Old South, which the Futralls represented. I became a romanticist, suddenly. Later, I learned to know Dr. Futrall well - I was the University's public relations director and in almost daily conference with him. And still later the Futralls' granddaughter, Joan Donaldson, was one of my students. But it was not until the summer of 1961 that I really learned to know Mrs. Futrall - when we jointly prepared her article for this issue of FLASHBACK. She guided me through her home, calling attention to details of construction, old family portraits and other things. She knows and loves the old home in which she has lived for 71 years. Can anyone match that record? -- WJL)

(Seven or eight years ago, I wrote and published a booklet titled "Some Old Fayetteville Homes." In the few years since I wrote about them and photographed them, two of the houses

have been torn down - the Wilsons house on West Maple and the Reed house on West Dickson. Several others are vulnerable, due to the encroachment of Business. The Futrall house is vulnerable, because a used car lot has sprouted next door. But as long as Mrs. Futrall lives and the Christian Church exists next door, this historic site is safe. After that, the deluge. I will not be there when they cut down the trees in front of the Futrall home, or in the front of the P.R. Green home on East Dickson. I remember better men than I am who pioneered that corner, built a college, fought a war, and finally succumbed to Used Cars. - WJL)

(From Volume XII, Number 2, June 1962.)

The Story of My Heart

An intimate account of the Rev. Philip Cone Fletcher's four years services as pastor of Fayetteville's Central Methodist Church, 1904-1908.

(Editor's Note: This article is from the Reverend Fletcher's book, "The Story of My Heart," published in 1929 at San Antonio. This is Chapter VI, entitled "The Athens of Arkansas." Its local interest is the many Fayetteville names and the author's judgment of his contemporaries. Also in his account of local events - for example, Governor Jeff Davis' public firing of the University president at the 1905 commencement exercises.

(Philip Cone Fletcher devotes a chapter to each church that he served: Siloam Springs, Eureka Springs, Fayetteville, First Church and Mt. Auburn Church in St. Louis, Texarkana, Winfield and First Church in the Little Rock, and Laurel Heights in San Antonio, Texas. This little-known book is in the library of Central Methodist Church, Fayetteville, and was called to our attention by Mrs. Hudson, the church historian.)

"The Athens of Arkansas"

Fayetteville is " The Queen of the Ozarks" -- beautiful, picturesque, charming. A lovelier spot cannot be found in America. Fayetteville is "the Athens of Arkansas" - classical, elite, historic, romantic. Here clusters much of the fine culture and sentiment of commonwealth. Here many noted men and

women of the Nation have come as "distinguished speakers" and "honored guests."

Here is now located the Methodist Western Assembly, on lofty Mount Sequoyah, overlooking the city and the valley. Thousands gather at this already famous summer assembly ground for study, recreation, and fellowship. Dr. Alexander Copeland Millar is the founder, the president; Dr. J.L. Bond was the fist superintendent, and he was succeeded by Rev. S.M. Yancey. The Assembly Association owns 440 acres, which include hilltops, beautiful springs, mineral water well, tourist camp, cottages, library cafeteria, book store, dormitories, chapel, athletic field, playground for children, and all modern conveniences.

Bishop Joseph Staunton Key, the aged, venerable and saintly prelate of Southern Methodism, who presided over the 69th session of the Arkansas Conference, at Prairie Grove, Nov. 23 to 27, 1904, appointed me to the pastorate of the Central Methodist Church, Fayetteville.

Rev. Edward R. Steel was my predecessor. He had rounded out a monumental quadrennium, and had brought to completion the handsome temple of worship which was almost finished during the constructive four years of Dr. Henry Hanesworth.

I faced a most inviting situation - a fine, cultured membership, a university packed with the flower of the young manhood and womanhood of the State, among them some six or seven hundred Methodist students.

On the occasion of my first public appearance, I was greeted by a packed house. I remember how my heart burned with a passion to so "preach Christ" as to enable all who heard me to see Him as "the one above ten thousand and altogether lovely."

At this distance I recall some of the scenes of that service. How they stand out upon memory's page. There, straight before me, sat the scholarly, dignified, gracious, benign John. L. Buchanan. On the front seat to my right, sat the quiet, discriminating, penetrative, critical George Wesley Droke, pulling at this red goatee. A little farther back was seated the classical, thoughtful, sincere, far-seeing John Hugh Reynolds, with that subdued smile playing across his face. To my left sat

the robust, red-faced, jovial, brusque but warm-hearted W.G. Vincenheller. There was William T. Nesbit - solemn, reserved, scrutinizing, yet affable, moving along the aisles - assisting in ushering the people to the pews. We became good friends. He was known as "The Censor." These fine laymen I already knew and they naturally attracted my attention. Others I came to know and love and honor as my contacts with them became numerous and intimate through the four years that stretched out before me. ...

While I was pastor of the Central Church, we celebrated the 75th hear of the planting of Methodism in Fayetteville and the 50th year of the church as a station. Bishop Eugene Russell Hendrix preached the two sermons - one at the morning hour and the other at night --- and the occasion was one of unusual interest throughout Arkansas Methodism. Dr. William Sherman assisted in the service. Prof. C.G. Carroll and his exquisite choir rendered special music. Mrs. B.E. Grabil, the highly skilled musician, was at the organ. Mrs. M.C. Bateman of the University rendered a lovely solo. Dr. John Hugh Reynolds presented marble tablets carrying the names of all the pastors, and these were accepted and dedicated. Mrs. Stephen K. Stone -- in his 89th year and the oldest member of the Church -- was present and occupied a seat of honor.

Dr. John Hugh Reynolds, head of the department of history and political science at the University of Arkansas, was chairman of the Central Church official board and also superintendent of the Sunday school, during my four years. No pastor ever had a more sane, strong, cooperative, loyal, progressive, far-seeing official than was he. No forward movement ever lacked his active championship and whole-hearted devotion.

Prof. George W. Droke, who has for more than 40 years been connected with the State University, from which he graduated in 1880, was one of the great leaders of the Central Church. For more than 30 years, he had been an official. He is strong, heroic, exacting, but devoted and loyal to the Kingdom. ...

On June 14, 1905, it being the commencement occasion, I was seated on the rostrum of the university assembly hall, beside Dr. Henry Simms Hartzog, the president, when Governor Jeff Davis,

in the presence of the large assemblage, "beheaded" Dr. Hartzog, politically speaking. A difference had arisen between the two, growing out of the campaign which was waged between Governor David and Judge Carroll D. Wood. This disagreement caused the Governor to oppose the re-election of Dr. Hartzog, and he was defeated, but it was not generally known till Governor Davis announced the election of Judge John H. Tillman. It had long been the custom for the Governor of the state and the President of University to march side by side from the President's office to the assembly hall, but on this occasion an exception was made. I, as the minister chosen to offer the invocation, marched with Governor Davis, and Rev. Dr. Samuel A. Steel, who had been chosen to deliver the baccalaureate address, accompanied Dr. Hartzog. When the Governor made the announcement of Dr. Hartzog's defeat, a wave of excitement swept over the great audience, and it looked for a time as if there would be a student demonstration. When Governor Davis sat down, Dr. Hartzog jumped to his feet, and in a few words declared that he had been "the victim of politics,' and that while he had gone down in defeat, he had gone down with "the banner of honor flying." Then, lest Governor Davis might reply, he said, "Dismissed" and the multitude filed out of the building.

There was no objection to the election of Judge Tillman, for he was beloved and honored by all Fayetteville where he had grown from boyhood to distinguished and noble manhood. Many did resent the political and vindictive aspects of the affairs. Judge Tillman made a splendid president. For 14 years he has been a member of Congress, where he had made and notable record. ...

I left a large harmonious church. Hundreds had been added to the roll of members. Great congregations had waited upon my ministry. I left with love in my heart for all. On Sept. 27, 1908, we departed for St. Louis. Rev. J.W. Herring, a transfer from Huntington, West Virginia, succeeded me. Thus closed four delightful years at "The "Athens of Arkansas."

(From Volume XII, Number 4, December, 1962)

Prairie Grove

By Captain S. P. Pittman

(The following is an undated and unsigned manuscript in the Rare Documents file of the Arkansas History Commission.)

On the 7th (December 1862) after the enemy had been driven to shelter behind his artillery and the sun had gone down in a cloud of sulphurous smoke and the dusk of evening was coming on, our regiment was moved from the corner of the Borden orchard, where we were formed after the last charge and where the hardest fighting of the day had occurred, to a point in the woods about 150 years to the south and west where we were given permission to "lie down arms" and take a rest we very much needed, having marched from Morrow's in the morning, fought one of the hardest battles of the war, and being hungry and nearly famished for water.

Naturally anxious about my family, whom I had not seen for several months, I obtained permission to visit them for a few hours, and slinging the canteens of two comrades over my shoulder with my own, I struck out through the woods to my home, which I found converted into a hospital. My family were, however, well and uninjured, and I was soon among the wounded who occupied all the available space in the building. ... I bade them goodbye, and with a sad but hopeful heart went back to the battleground. ...

Feeling satisfied now that no armed enemy occupied the field, I concluded to go out toward the center of the orchard where I could hear a voice calling, I thought for water. Up to this point I do not remember that I had decided what to do, as regarded myself. My coming into the orchard was for a special purpose as I have stated. Once there, I decided to relieve the thirst of the wounded until the water in my three canteens gave out.

Passing a number of dead, I stopped near the middle of the orchard to reconnoiter. I had stood but a moment when a form in front and to my right, raised partially on his elbow and shrieked, "Mother, Mother." In his agony and delirium the wounded soldier had remembered his mother and, with his

lifeblood fast ebbing away, his cry went out to her who, perhaps at that very moment, was praying for her darling boy's safe return. But war is cruel and, the cry of loved ones is often only answered in another world. I would like to think, as the end drew near, the dying imagined his mother, felt her soft kiss upon his bloodless lips, and as the slender fingers brushed back the damp hair, heard her gentle voice say, "All is well. Lie still and sleep. Your mother is on guard tonight." Who knows? May she not have been there?

Until now, nothing has seemed strange to me. I had crossed and re-crossed the field so often during the day that the bodies lying upon the ground were familiar objects. But now a chill crept over me that I had not felt during the fiercest of the conflict. The moon was gliding down behind the treetops that bordered the field on the west and long shadows stretched far out into the open ground where I was standing. And just then an owl flittered past with the shadowy, ghost-like movement peculiar to that bird. And I began to realize the weird surroundings to such an extent that a desire possessed me to leave them behind.

As I turned toward the woods on the west, the cry of that delirious boy rang out upon the still night, and I only stopped when passing three soldiers grouped under an apple tree, where they had managed to kindle a small fire with twigs found near. They were all wounded and unable to leave the field. Two wore the blue overcoats of the federal army and the other the gray jacket of the rebel, but with them the war was over and physical suffering banished all hatred. Thoughts of home, wife or mother, perhaps filled their minds and made the ghastly wounds give more intense pain, because for them the end was near.

Leaving my canteens with these men, I left the orchard and struck out for the mountain, south over which I could still hear our army passing. It was a sad and lonely tramp, but I went into camp with the boys just at daylight, on the same ground from which we had moved just 24 hours before. To me it seemed an age; I could not realize that all I had witnessed and felt could happen in so short a time, and it was impossible to keep from looking around for the familiar forms that never more would be with us. That morning when I called the company roll, many

gallant fellows failed to answer for the first time. From this camp our hardships began and the homes we left behind us that night knew us no more until the end of the war.

Often during the years that have followed I have thought of that night and wondered if those left lying in death were not happier than their comrades who were spared to endure so much and so long. And often that boy's cry for his mother has rung in my ears as I heard it then; and a century of time could not dim the memory of that night upon the battlefield of Prairie Grove. Nothing but the grave can banish the vivid recollections from my mind!

A Christmas Story

In the University of Arkansas Library there is a privately printed book that gives the history of a group of German families who came to northwest Arkansas in 1850 and founded the village of Hermannsburg (now Dutch Mills) in western Washington County. Prominent among them were two brothers names Jean and Karl Hermann.

They carried on agriculture, a store, a mill, and other industries. They lived on good terms with their neighbors and were held in high esteem as peaceful and honest folks. They were well on their way to becoming prosperous, when the first signs of approaching civil war appeared. They tried to remain neutral, but were labeled as Abolitionists and were considered enemies of the South.

From 1860 to 1862 they were in constant danger from the opposing armies and especially from the thieving and murdering bushwhackers who overran northwest Arkansas. In the fall of 1862 it became evident that continued existence at Hermannsburg was impossible, so the Hermann brothers and their families made ready to flee for safety to St. Louis.

They secured a cavalry escort from General Blunt, the union commander. They left Cane Hill Dec. 18 in four army wagons, taking only absolute necessities and leaving everything else behind. The group numbered 19, including eleven children from 1 year to 9 years old. The Hermanns reached General Herron's camp at Prairie Grove on Dec. 19. He gave them an order permitting them to travel with a commissary train to

Fayetteville and on to Rolla. The following paragraph is from the German diary of Nanni, wife of one of the Hermann brothers:

"We left Prairie Grove on Dec. 24 and reached Fayetteville that same day. We camped near a spring at the north end of that village, where we spent Christmas day. But the Christ-child had lost its magic. Looking up at the star-studded sky on Christmas Eve, our memory saw again the lighted Christmas trees in our distant Fatherland."

Nanni did not live to reach St. Louis. She died on the journey, leaving her husband with two small children, age 2 and 5, both born in Washington County, Arkansas.

The spot where these 19 refugees spent their heartsick Christmas in 1862 was Big Spring on East Spring street in Fayetteville, which is just across the creek from the Lemke home. On Christmas Eve 1962, I shall walk out in my backyard and look across the ravine. And I shall remember two mothers -- Nanni Hermann with her babies, sleeping in a wagon bed in Fayetteville, and Mary with her Baby, asleep in a stable in Bethlehem.

- W.J. Lemkke

(From Volume 18, Number 2, May, 1968)

Museums Supported by WCHS Members

By Deane C. Carter

Headquarters House, soon to be dedicated in Fayetteville as a Civil War memorial, home and museum, is an example of the revival of interest in the heritage of the past, and the determination to preserve the remaining sites and the materials of our historic past. This project has the support of the Washington County Historical Society as a whole, with committees in charge of the different phases of development. This program calls to mind the several museums or memorials in the county, and in Arkansas, with which members of our own Washington County society are associated. There may be others beside the ones listed here: if so, we would like to hear about them.

One - the Arkansas Post county museum - has been sponsored from the beginning by the Arkansas County Museum Association of which WCHS member, Cleon Collier, is the president. The Arkansas Post museum is written up in the Arkansas Democrat of March 24, 1968. It memorializes the historic site first established in 1686 by DeTonti "an impressive five-unit complex spread over 2.6 acres, built in the tradition of the 19th century" and with contents ranging from home and household furniture and tools, to prehistoric artifacts, books, curios, and items of historical interest.

Back to the local scene, Alvin Seamster's privately-owned museum is one of the most complete. It is just east of the Pea Ridge Battlefield Park, mainly on the Civil War. Mr. Seamster has many objects from the surrounding area. And he is an expert on Civil War history, especially of the Pea Ridge battle.

The Pea Ridge Battlefield National Park, represented on our membership roll by the historian, is being developed by the rehabilitation of the land, rebuilding of the Elkhorn Tavern, and with extensive displays in the headquarters building. Then at Prairie Grove Fred McCuistion, WCHS, and others have sponsored the State-supported Battlefield Park and Hindman Memorial. Hester Davis of the Arkansas Archeological Survey, also a member, has her office in the University of Arkansas museum, where a most complete display of Indian prehistoric materials is kept.

In Springdale, the city is developing a "Shiloh Museum" based in large measure on the collections of the late Judge Guy Howard, Mrs. L.W. Searcy and J.C. Cagle, WCHS members, are on the board charged with the museum program. Finally, the most complete museum of Indian artifacts - prehistoric and historic - is the property of Zel H. Doan, whose new building with its displays is located south of Dutch Mills, on Highway 59. The Doans have been active members of the WCHS.

The listing of these museums suggests a tour that should be rewarding: Start from Fayetteville with its Headquarters House and the University museum; to Prairie Grove and Dutch Mills to the southwest; then back to Springdale, then to Pea Ridge Battlefield Park and Seamster museum east of Rogers.

(From Volume 18, Number 3, August, 1968)

Headquarters House Dedicated

The "Tebbetts House," once the headquarters, successively of the Confederate and Union commanders in the Civil War, was dedicated on April 21, with a full house of members and guest. Speakers were Raymond Rebsamen, whose major gift made the purchase possible, Ted R. Galey of Neosho, Missouri, whose mother was born in the house and who is a grandson of Judge Jonas M. Tebbetts; Earnie Deane, who prepared the souvenir booklet for the House; and Tom Feathers, president of the Society. The house was furnished with many valuable pieces of period furniture for the occasion, and Mr. Galey brought a silver service that once was used by the Tebbetts family while living there, and presented a portrait of Judge Tebbetts, which will be hung in the Judge's study. Hostesses at the dedication wore ante-bellum costumes.

(From Volume 18, Number, 1968)

Uncle Walt Lemke

W J Lemke, Editor*

***Deane G. Carter, Editor this issue**

"Uncle Walt" still holds court at 231 East Dickson Street, on the porch in the summertime and in his easy chair in the living room in cold weather. He has a steady stream of visitors, especially heavy on football weekends and enough letters so that his Christmas mailing list was the biggest ever last December.

This note will not be a eulogy. W.J. Lemke has had enough honors to do two or three ordinary men: A Doctor's Degree from his Alma Mater; a scholarship in his honor; a Distinguished Citizen award; testimonial dinners; citations; and one honor upon another for his work in history, high school press association, Prairie Grove Battlefield commission, letters to men and women in the armed forces, and still more, I expect.

But, what with eye trouble, the car disposed of, and fewer contacts on local history, he will not be as active in the future. But I don't think he will ever retire. The following story was written just a few weeks ago to summarize the rather

remarkable 18-year span of the Washington County Historical Society, and the continuous publication of FLASHBACK. This is the 90th issue, along with 56 booklets.

Eighteen Years Of the Washington County Historical Society

By W.J. Lemke

In the fall of 1950, I sent out a letter to some fifty Washington County citizens, asking if the would be interested in forming a county historical society. Forty of the 50 cards were returned, approving the idea and offering to help. Early in January 1951, a meeting was arranged in the student lounge pf the Lutheran church.

We asked interested persons to bring and display their old photographs; these were arranged on long tables where they attracted much attention. Enough interest was aroused to justify going ahead with an organization. I was named president and Tom Feathers was chosen as secretary. Mr. Feathers offered space for the Society at his office, 12 1/2 East Center Street. Later when he went out of the chiropody business, we took over both rooms and installed shelves and equipment.

However, for about eight years all our printing was done in the Journalism department at the University. I cut the stencils for FLASHBACK, and Feathers ran them off on the duplicating machine. Pages were assembled by volunteers, sometimes as many as 50, including a loyal delegation from Springdale. It was volunteer work that made it possible to produce a magazine, FLASHBACK, first as a bi-monthly, then later on as an enlarged quarterly.

Almost from the beginning, we published a series of Bulletins or Booklets of historical interest (which now, after 18 years, number 56 titles, most of which have been sold out). Dues were $2.00 a year in the beginning; however, other means were used to obtain funds. Most popular were the occasional auction sales, where donated relics, books, and antiques were sold to the highest bidder. One of these sales brought in $350 for the Society's treasury.

Quarterly meetings of the Society aroused much interest.

Most were held in the Pioneer Room of the Mountain Inn. Usually there were speakers. Largest attendance was at the time when Judge Lee Seamster told of the famous Sneed contempt-of-court case in Fayetteville which was carried to the Supreme Court. Also, a full house greeted Ed Vandeventer when he told about life in Fayetteville at the time his father was the mayor. And I recall the meeting when Oscar Williams reminisced about his boyhood along the Middle Fork of the White River.

It was early decided to hold occasional pilgrimages to historic places in the county, for example to Prairie Grove, Cane Hill, Mount Comfort, and the White Rive Valley. Out-of-town meetings were held at Springdale, Prairie Grove, Cane Hill, Dutch Mills, Farmington, Elkins, and Winslow. In some years the society held contests with certificates and cash awards for the best historical essays written by pupils in the county public schools. Miss Mary Droke was in charge of this feature.

The Society, from the beginning, awarded Distinguished Citizen citations, usually once each year, although in 1953 there were six awards, to such men and women as F.S. Root, Dr. E.F. Ellis, Miss Maude Duncan, Mrs. Ellen Richardson, Dr. Will Mock, and Rev. William Sherman and some twelve or fifteen others. Nor were famous places overlooked. For the Society takes pride in the placing of permanent markers at historic spots in the county, with appropriate inscriptions. Typical markers have been placed at the Headquarters house, Cane Hill mill, the Stone house, Ozark Institute at Mt. Comfort, and others. These have often been paid for by small contributions from many members of the Society.

Frequent help has been given in support of related activities. I was on the Prairie Grove Battlefield Commission for some time and prepared the inscriptions for the battlefield markers.

We have provided speakers for school groups, historical events and tour parties. For example, the Chicago Civil War Round Table pilgrimage of some fifty people who came to see the Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove Battlefields. We have been called upon to help in organizing historical groups in other communities; in particular we worked with the Benton Count Society at Rogers and the Crawford County group at Van Buren.

With the increasing interest in genealogy, our Society helped

organize the Arkansas Genealogical Society, and began publishing the Arkansas Family Historian in March, 1962, but since we were essentially a county society, the publication was a bit too ambitious an undertaking. So after a couple of years, the Historian was turned over to a new group in the AGS, and the Family Historian has continued at Conway.

Our Society has received honors and recognition beyond the borders of the state, two citations from the national society for state and local history. Less generally recognized but certainly of considerable importance, is the routine service given by the Society and its officers and committees in finding and preserving and publishing material that would otherwise be lost or at least would never be brought to the attention of interested persons and groups. For example, we have published records of more than 150 cemeteries in the county, with many, many hundreds of gravestone inscriptions. We have listed all of the post offices that have been established in Washington County, for its very beginning. And hundreds of letters have been written about people and events making up our history.

Even before my retirement from the University, the publishing was transferred to the Center Street office, where our Gestetner duplication equipment turned out hundreds of pages of local history. Then in 1967, with the campaign headed by Tom Feathers and his committees, the Headquarters House was obtained and the Society moved to 118 East Dickson Street in January, 1968. The house was dedicated in April, 1968, with a program that included recognition of Raymond Rebsamen as principal donor, P.R. Green, who made a substantial gift in the negotiations of the purchase, and Ted Galey, whose family once owned the house. Eventually it is planned that the house will become a fully equipped museum and memorial.

Throughout the eighteen years of the Washington County Historical Society's existence, many people have helped in its growth and progress. I have had the privilege of serving as the editor for all of that time; and some of the time I was also an officer – either President or Secretary. Tom Feathers and I ran the affairs of the Society in the early years. We had the help of an informal group that met each month at the Lemke home. Among those who attended most of the meetings were Miss

Grace Albright, Mrs. Lessie S. Read, Allan S. Humphreys, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Shreve, Prof. F.S. Root, H.E. Buchanan, J.E. Bunch, Robert Logan, Dr. Fount Richardson, Cornelia McIlroy Stuart, D.D. Deaver, L.W. Searcy and many others, of course.

Later, about 1960, the Society was more formally organized, and incorporated as a non-profit corporation, and a Board of Directors was appointed. Society presidents have been: W.J. Lemke, Fount Richardson, Robert R. Logan, D.D. Deaver, Roy A. Scott, Tom Feathers, D.E. Williams, Davis P. Richardson, John A. Reed, and L.W. Searcy. Deane G. Carter was Secretary, Treasurer and Publisher over a period of about six years.

Others have helped from time to time, and in whatever way they could assist in the Society's program; Miss Bernice Karnes, and before that, Allan S. Humphreys gave much time to family genealogy; Grace Albright assisted with the scrap book; the Galloway sisters prepared many bits of information for us; and more recently Mrs. Helen Lewis Bocquin, Tom Lavender, L.L. Brown, and their committees; the Woman's Civic Club and the Council of Garden Clubs have aided with the development of the Headquarters House.

(From Volume 19, Number 1, February, 1969.)

The Passing of Professor Lemke

Our Society's membership is so big and so widely distributed geographically that doubtless some members do not know of the death on December 4, 1968, of our founder and editor, Professor W.J. Lemke. Thus, FLASHBACK has the sad duty of letting you know. He was ill only four days, at his home, when he apparently suffered a heart attack and died within minutes. His wife of more than half a century was with him, and our president, Tom Feathers, arrived at the house for a visit at the moment of the attack.

Mr. Lemke lies in Evergreen Cemetery in Fayetteville, in a grave almost within the shadows of the towers of the "Old Main" building of the University of Arkansas, where he served for 40 years. Nearby are the resting places of some of Northwest Arkansas' other great citizens, most of whom came here long before he did but whose stories he knew and whose deeds inspired him. None of them made more contributions in their

His interest in journalism was equaled by his interest in history. He helped revive the Arkansas Historical Society and was a past president of the organization. He founded the Washington County Historical Society and for years published its quarterly bulletin, The FLASHBACK. He did extensive research into the local history of counties and families in the northwestern area of the state and published numerous articles and brochures as a result of this research.

Prof. Lemke accepts a silver tray from The Arkansas High School Press Assoc., as Mrs. Lemke looks on.

He was a founding member of the Arkansas Genealogical Society, a former member of the Prairie Grove Battlefield Commission, and was an honorary member of the Creek Indian Nation.

Lemke was also a member of the American Association of Teachers in Journalism, Arkansas Press Association, Arkansas Education Association, Sigma Delta Chi and the Methodist Church.

A perpetual scholarship fund was established in his honor in 1962 by University alumni, his friends and associates. The Lemke Scholarships are awarded annually in memory of Lemke's service to the UA and the youth of the state.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to the W.J. Lemke Scholarship Fund at the University of

Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Dr. David Mullins, president of the University, said Wednesday:

"His life was one of dedication to his students, to his institution, to his profession for which he had such enthusiasm and high regard, and to his adopted state which he came to love so much that he often said, 'I wouldn't live anywhere else.'

"His death will be mourned by all in the University community as well as by his friends in Arkansas and throughout the World."

When Lemke retired from the UA in 1959, an entire edition of the UA newspaper, the Arkansas Traveler, was filled with tributes to him.

Among these was one from Maurice "Footsie" Britt, now lieutenant governor of Arkansas. Britt wrote, thanking Lemke for having achieved the presentation to Britt of the Congressional Medal of Honor in Razorback Stadium where Britt had played football.

Britt wrote that Lemke "accomplished almost the impossible" because up to that time no recipients had ever received the medal at a presentation in his home state.

Another was from Joe Thalheimer, a journalism professor with Lemke for many years. Thalheimer wrote:

"Uncle Walt has sometimes been called the Mr. Chips of the Journalism Department. That isn't too good a characterization of him.

"Mr. Chips' sympathy and understanding he does have, but there's also salt and iron and vinegar. There's a puckish humor and just a touch of irascibility which all add up to a beloved and unique entity -- Uncle Walt Lemke."

How He Started His Hobby

In the field of local and state history, Professor Lemke did some of his most effective, satisfying, and significant work during his 40 years of residence in Arkansas. Not everyone who knew of this work knew how he came to undertake it. He answered this question in a talk in 1955. Here is his explanation:

"History as a hobby is a spiritual activity, according to my old philosophy prof at Northwestern University. He defined a

spiritual activity as something you do with no expectation of material reward, something you just have to do because of an inner compulsion, like singing and laughing and dancing and praying and golfing and poetry and history. But I'm enough of a realist to know that history as a spiritual activity has little appeal for the practical person.

"History is my hobby. I'd like to tell you how I got involved.

"When I was in high school, in the north woods of Wisconsin, many years ago, we studied about the Civil War. I remember that there were two chapters on the war in the textbook and I vaguely remember Shiloh and Bull Run. The names of Grant and Sherman appeared, and Lee and Stonewall Jackson. But I'm positive that Cleburne and Hindman were not in our textbook.

"The Civil War was something that happened down South. It had given us, up in Wisconsin, no destruction, no reconstruction. And no graves - or so I thought.

"On the first Sunday when I came to Arkansas 27 years ago, I wandered aimlessly about Fayetteville and quite by accident came to the National Cemetery. I had never seen a national cemetery, so I wandered into the grounds. Almost the first thing I saw was a plot containing some 20 or more graves, each of which bore a headstone with an inscription that identified the soldier buried there as from Wisconsin. Immediately the pages in a half-forgotten history book came to life. I asked myself, how did it happen that these Wisconsin boys are buried in Arkansas soil, a thousand miles from their homes? And that was my introduction to Prairie Grove and Pea Ridge.

"Many people have contributed to my education in Arkansas history, but "Uncle Bob" Wilson gave me my first lessons. "Uncle Bob" had served in the Arkansas legislature 26 years. His father, "Honest Alf" Wilson, knew personally Archibald Yell, Albert Pike, E.C. Boudinot, the Roanes, the Conways, the Johnsons and other celebrities of territorial and early statehood days. So "Uncle Bob" told me about Cabell's attack on Fayetteville, and how he, Bob, as an 11-year-old boy, had seen the dead men and horses piled in confusion at what is now the corner of Dickson Street and College Avenue in Fayetteville. He told me how he had gone to Prairie Grove on the day after the battle there, and

about the litter on the battlefield, the dead and dying in the village church. The next day I went to the University Library and read both the Union and the Confederate accounts of the battles in Northwest Arkansas. I secured maps of the battles and visited Prairie Grove and Pea Ridge.

"I've visited both battlefields many times since then and have written a number of articles about these two important Civil War engagements. When you visit Prairie Grove, you meet Tom Hindman and Herron, Shelby, and Blunt. And at Pea Ridge, you get acquainted not only with the fighting men but with the Cherokee Trail of Tears and the Butterfield Stage route, and presently you're involved in an affair from which there is no easy escape – a love of Arkansas history.

"You know how one discovery leads to another. That's how I came to spend my summers traveling in all of Arkansas' 75 counties."

Washington County Historical Society Membership Information and Application

For your membership in the Washington County Historical Society, you'll receive FLASHBACK, our quarterly publication featuring Washington County's history, historical articles about family and public life in the area; and FLASHFORWARD, a quarterly newsletter covering current events and activities of the Society.

Annual membership dues are for the calendar year. They include the February, May, August, and November issues of FLASHBACK. Membership amounts above the $25 general membership are tax deductible. These donations, which are tax deductible under current law, are placed in the Headquarters House Annual Fund and will help maintain Headquarters House and other structures maintained by the Washington County Historical Society.

Please check the type of membership you prefer, fill out the information below and return this with the appropriate check to the Washington County Historical Society, 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

____ $25 - General Membership

____ $15 - Student, Senior, Public Library Membership

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____ Renewal

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